



# ***Media Advisory***

DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC SECURITY  
David A. Berns, Director

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **MEDIA CONTACT**

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Visit the DES website at

[www.azdes.gov](http://www.azdes.gov)

Foster care and adoption website at

[www.azkidsneedu.gov](http://www.azkidsneedu.gov)

### **WHO\*:**

DES Director David Berns, foster family representatives, local licensing agencies, child advocates and community volunteers.

### **WHAT:**

In celebration of National Foster Care Awareness Month in May, hundreds of child welfare advocates and community members will gather to tie nearly 9,000 blue ribbons (one for every child in Arizona's foster care system) on the trees at Heritage Square. The ribbons will stay up throughout May in recognition of the increasing numbers of children in foster care in Arizona, and the critical need for foster families and case managers.

Foster family representatives and DES Director David Berns will tie 20 of the ribbons during the 4 p.m. press conference to signify the 20 children removed from their homes that day.

### **WHY:**

To recognize the many contributions foster parents provide to abused and neglected children in Arizona and encourage the community to become involved in these efforts. Too many children are lingering in shelters or group homes because of the lack of foster homes to meet their needs. The goal of foster care is to find for each child a safe, permanent home as quickly as possible, but with existing foster homes filled to capacity, options for children already in the system and those entering the system are few. Often, children are in multiple placements before the appropriate placement is found.

### **WHEN:**

Thursday, May 19, 2005  
3:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m. Ribbon tying event  
4:00 p.m. Press conference

### **WHERE:**

Heritage Square  
7<sup>th</sup> Street and Monroe, Downtown Phoenix